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Newsletter

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PAIMENT FOR THE LEWIS AND CLARK EXPEDITION. The official journal of the Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804-1806, published by Meriwether Lewis, ends with this comment:

Tuesday 23rd. Septr. 1806

... descended to the Mississippi and down that river to St. Louis at which place we arived about 12 oClock. we Suffered the party to fire off their pieces as a Salute to the Town. we were met by all the village and received a harty welcom from its inhabitants . . .¹

The expedition did not end here, however. Three years earlier President Thomas Jefferson had given Lewis instructions that he should

On re-entering the U.S. and reaching a place of safety, discharge any of your attendants who may desire & deserve it, procuring for them immediate paiment of all arrears of pay & cloathing which may have incurred since their departure, and assure them that they shall be recommended to the liberality of the legislature for a grant of a souldier's portion of land each . . . & repair yourself with your papers to the seat of government.²

To meet these expenses Jefferson recognized that the \$2,500 secretly appropriated by Congress for the expedition was insufficient. On July 4, 1803, Lewis was issued a "letter of general credit" which authorized him to draw on the funds of the departments of State, Treasury, War, or Navy to meet his expenses and

to pledge "the faith of the United States that these draughts shall be paid punctually at the date they are made payable."³

The day after the party's arrival at St. Louis, Lewis wrote to Jefferson sketching the broad outline of the history of the expedition and notifying the President of his pending arrival in Washington. He would be accompanied by the chief of the Mandan Scheheke and several Osage chiefs, but he would muster out most of his men before he left St. Louis. For them, at least, the expedition was over.

Lewis chose to pay off the twenty-nine men in his company with drafts on the War Department. The men were not paid the entire sum in cash but were given "bills of exchange" (like a modern-day check) for the bulk of their pay and enough currency to get them home. His extant bills of exchange are dated October 11 and October 17, indicating those were the dates when most of these transactions were made. A typical bill of exchange read:

Sir:

Saint Louis, October 11th, 1806

My Bill of Exchange No. 72 of this date in favour of Thomas P. Howard on order for one hundred Dollars _____ cents is for the sum due him in part, on final settlement for his services as a Private on an expedition lately conducted under the auspices of the Government through the interior of the Continent of North America to the Pacific Ocean. I have the honor to be with due Consideration Your obt. Servt.

MERIWETHER LEWIS, Capt.

1st. U.S. Regt. Infy

The reference to the payment's being only "in part" was an assurance to the soldier of the "liberality of the [national] legislature" in granting him a portion of land in addition to the pecuniary rewards of the expedition.

When the company had arrived in St. Louis, Capt. William Clark recorded in his journal: "I wrote Govr. [William Henry] Harrison [of Indiana Territory] and to my friends in Kentucky."⁴ His letter to the governor likely announced the company's

Louisville November 9th 1806.

Sir.

My bill of exchange No: 115. of this date in favor of Capt. William Clark for the sum of four hundred dollars is in part of monies due him for his services while on the late expedition to the Pacific Ocean, and which when paid will be charged to me on the faith of my final settlement with the United States relative to the said Expedition. —

I have the honor to be with due considerations

Your obt. Servt.

Meriwether Lewis Capt.

1st U.S. Regt. Dragoons.

Genl. Henry Dearborn
Secretary at War.

planned arrival at Vincennes which was Harrison's headquarters. His "friends in Kentucky" included his brother, George Rogers Clark, to whom he wrote a brief sketch of the expedition leaving out the details "as," he said, "I shall shortly be with you."⁵

Soon after October 17, Lewis, Clark, and their company left St. Louis. They arrived at Vincennes on the thirtieth and ten days later were at Louisville. Here Clark left the company, probably to visit his brothers, and Lewis gave him a bill of exchange for \$400 as partial payment for his services on the expedition to the Pacific. That bill of exchange, which is now owned by BYU Library, is reproduced on page 3. When Lewis and the remainder of the company left Louisville, they traversed the Wilderness Road and the Great Valley Road to arrive at Washington, D.C., on December 28, 1806. Clark joined him there sometime later.

Final payment to the men in the expedition was requested on January 15, 1807 when Lewis wrote to Secretary Dearborn requesting that land be granted to the men in the exploration party. Lewis and Clark each received sixteen hundred acres of land. The other members of the expedition each received 320 acres. Congress also appropriated \$1100 for each member of the expedition, a bonus equal to the regular pay he received. This was granted March 3, 1807. Lewis was made governor of Upper Louisiana Territory, and Clark was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel.

1. Bernard DeVoto, ed., *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (Boston: 1953), vol. 5, pp. 393-4.
2. Thomas Jefferson to Meriwether Lewis, 4 July 1803, in Donald Jackson ed., *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition with Related Documents* (Urbana, Illinois: 1962), pp. 65-6.
3. Jefferson to Lewis, *Ibid*, pp. 105-6.
4. DeVoto, *Journals*, vol. 5, p. 394.
5. Jackson, *Letters*, pp. 334-5.

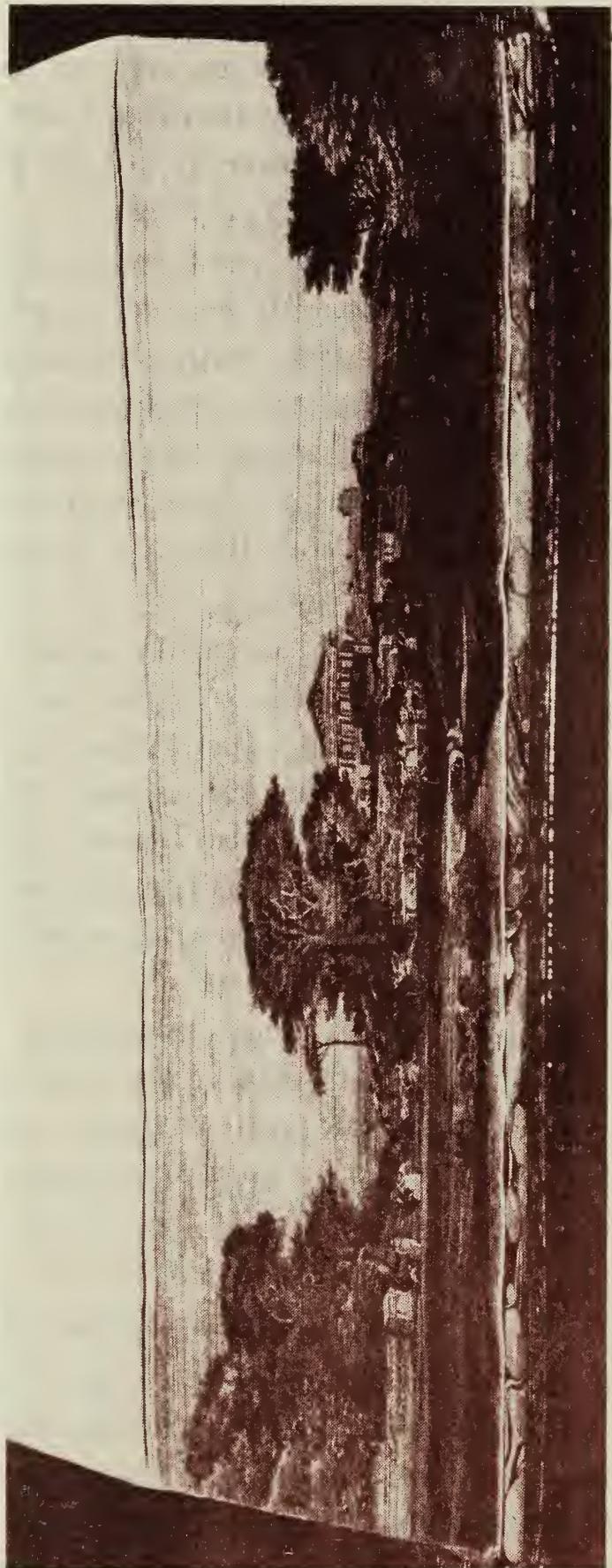
FORE EDGE PAINTING. In the vault of the Harold B. Lee Library is an unusual collection which never fails to delight those who view it. It consists of forty books decorated with miniature scenes on the fore edge, or right edge, of the pages. These water color paintings, which suddenly appear along the edge of a book when it is opened, are representative of an art perfected in England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The idea of decorating the edge of a book is as old as books themselves, but the British innovation added an entirely new dimension. Before printing was invented, large manuscript books were stored on their sides. To facilitate the location of a volume, owners often wrote the title across the edge of the pages.

As the art of printing developed, so did that of bookbinding. The spine of the binding became a natural place to put the title of the book, leaving the edge free to be otherwise ornamented. This was often done with a name or heraldic symbol. Fine bindings were works of art, and the identifying marks on the edge included coats of arms, crests, or stylized floral designs painted in brilliant colors or stamped in gold with a hot tool. This kind of fore edge decoration was accomplished by clamping the book tightly closed and painting on the edges of the compressed leaves. When a fore edge is painted in this manner, the painting is visible only when the book is closed.

In England a different type of fore edge painting was developed. When one first picks up such a book, he sees nothing but the gold along the edges. When he lays it down, however, and opens it to the title page, an attractive and sometimes beautifully executed watercolor painting appears. It disappears again when the book is closed.

The English technique was quite different from the standard European decoration. A book was fanned in an open position and securely clamped. The artist would then paint his picture on the small exposed end portion of the pages. It was necessary that he use a fairly dry brush and hold it in a perpendicular position while he painted. Too much water or too great an angle of the brush stroke would cause the colors to run along the edges of the pages. When the paint was quite dry, the clamps were removed.



The temple of Jupiter, painted on the fore edge of John Gillies' *History of Ancient Greece*, Vol. II; London, A. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1786.

At that point the painting could be seen when the book was closed, but it had a squashed, distorted appearance.

After the book was clamped closed and slightly burnished, the fore edge was gilded. The gold leaf, glued to the edge with egg white, entirely obscured the painting when the book was closed.

The earliest known fore edge painting was done in 1653 by the brothers Steven and Thomas Lewis. Little is known about them except that they did meticulous work in their London shop. All record of them disappears after 1664, a year of the Black Plague. Other bookbinders soon began to copy their technique, the most successful being Samuel Mearne, a politician who received the lucrative appointment as bookbinder to King Charles II. Mearne employed some of Europe's best bookbinders and most capable watercolor artists.

Fore edge painting was perfected some years later by the firm of Edwards of Halifax. The full three hundred-year history of the art has no era equal to the sixty-year period between 1774 and 1834 when William Edwards and his son Thomas placed fore edge paintings on some of their finest bindings.

One can often date fore edge painting by the artist's subject matter. In Mearne's time, the fore edges were decorated with heraldic symbols and floral designs, but by the time William Edwards decorated his first book, an entirely new concept of art had spread over England. The picturesque beauty of forest scenery was dominant, and it was natural that this theme also appeared in the fore edge paintings.

After Thomas Edwards took over his father's firm, he discovered the market value of illustrating houses and parks of the English nobility. The general theme of his paintings shifted from the pastoral to estates of the elite and scenes of churches and cities. "A View From The Top Of Princes Street, Edinburgh," in Thomas Edwards' *Introductory Lectures on Modern History*, is an important example by Edwards in the Lee Library collection.

Thomas Edwards had a feeling for the appropriate. Soon, the homes of the gentry as main subjects of fore edge paintings had given way to literary shrines such as Lord Byron's home at Newstead Abbey and Defoe's birthplace. He decorated classics with



Delhi, showing the entrance to the palace, painted on the fore edge of Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh: an Oriental Romance*; London, Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, & Longman, 1836.

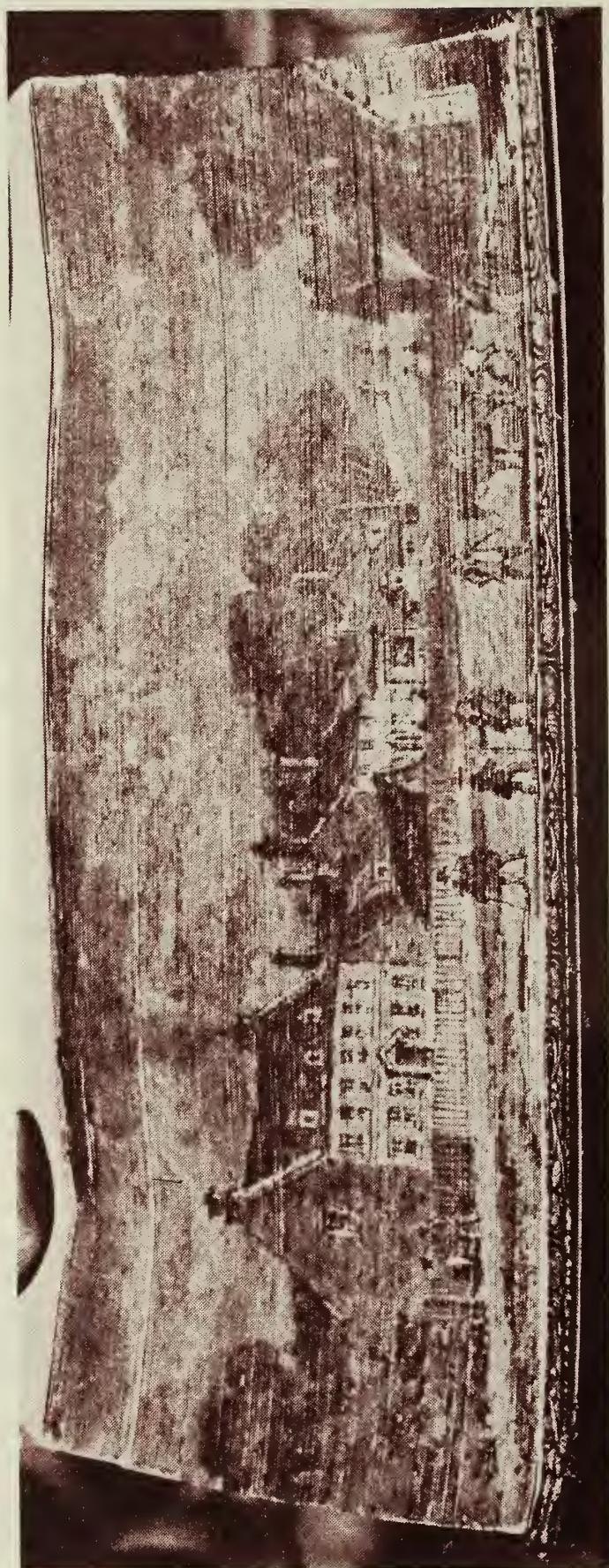
paintings of Venice and Rome and some biographies had portraits of their subjects. An excellent example in BYU's collection is found in John Gillies' two volume *History of Ancient Greece*. (London, printed for A. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1786.) On the fore edge of volume one is painted "The Harbor at Athens" and on volume two a "Temple of Jupiter". Many of the fore edge scenes are painted from plates in the volumes. "Entrance of the Canale Grande" and the "Ducal Palace" are copied from the engraving by Finden in Edward Smedley's *Venetian History*.

Artists of the Edwards' firm learned to enliven their work with vivid, brilliant colors and delicate details such as reflections on the surface of a lake and shadows cast by the trees upon a moving stream.

Perhaps the most significant Edwards innovation, however, is the double painting where one scene shows itself if the book is opened from the front and an entirely different scene appears when the book is opened from the back. At first thought, there may seem to be nothing extraordinary about painting one picture on the front and another on the back, but in practice it was a terribly difficult task. Even when the paintings were carefully executed, traces of color would pass from the front to the back of the paper. The artist who painted double paintings, therefore, had to coordinate two paintings so precisely that any leakage of color was made a part of the opposite picture. At the same time, the pictures had to differ enough from one another to enhance the element of surprise which made double fore edge painting so popular.

There are comparatively few double fore edge paintings, apparently since the skill, time, and patience involved did not bring commensurate profits. Most double fore edge paintings are of rivers, castles, monasteries, and similar picturesque subjects from the beginning of the Edwards of Halifax period.

Of the eight double fore edge paintings owned by the library, the most interesting are "Oxford" and "Cambridge," and "St. Louis from the River" with "Washington from Arlington Heights," both in early nineteenth century editions of the *Book of Common Prayer*.



A rural village in England, water color painting on the fore edge of William Howitt's *Homes and Haunts of the Most Eminent British Poets*; London, George Routledge & Co., 1857.

During this time there were several other important bookbinders in England who also decorated their books with fore edge paintings. One of the most successful was the firm of Taylor & Hessey. Their work is easily recognizable by the stamp on their bindings. Bartholomew Frye, another who produced fine work, identified his bindings with a small pink sticker.

The increased popularity of this painting was largely responsible for its ultimate decadence as an art. Because it was readily marketable to indiscriminate curiosity buyers and souvenir seekers, firms began to paint to satisfy such customers.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, enough of these books had crossed the Atlantic that American companies began to copy the art for their own markets.

In 1856 James B. Nicholson, a Philadelphia bookbinder, wrote *A Manual of the Art of Book Binding*. It contained what are probably the first printed instructions on how to do fore edge painting, and American bookbinders were soon producing such books with interesting, often comical, results. Curiously enough, American artists rarely chose to paint books by American authors and showed no interest in painting scenes of their homeland. They seemed to have no sense of what was appropriate and sometimes put the paintings on backwards so that they could only be seen if the book were opened from the back. Fore edge painting never became an important art form in America. There was an absence of capable watercolor artists who were willing to take the time to execute a painting on the edge of a book.

After World War I, as more Americans came to Europe and purchased souvenirs, fore edge painters discovered that English scenes did not have the same appeal to American tourists as they did to the British. American tourists, for some unexplainable reason, seemed more inclined to purchase scenes of their homeland when they visited Europe than they did scenes of England. Fore edge painters soon responded, turning out historic views of old New York, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and other American cities. They produced paintings of low quality for higher prices to fill the tourist market. Sometimes they painted new books that did not sell well or decorated old books to sell for unreasonable

prices. In some few instances, of course, modern fore edge painting was of fine quality with subjects appropriately chosen, but on the whole it became a decadent—some say even a lost—art.

The finest fore edge painting available to the collector today is still the work of Edwards of Halifax. Paintings done under the direction of William Edwards (1755-1780) are rather scarce and correspondingly expensive. Those of Thomas Edwards are much more readily available and rate among the finest examples of this extraordinary art. While it is often impossible to precisely identify either the painter or the firm that produced the paintings, the collection at BYU Library contains a fine representation of the whole history of the art.



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